

## what can i do for you? by meronicavars

**Category:** IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

**Genre:** Cuddling & Snuggling, Forensic Files, Gay Mike Hanlon, M/M, Platonic Cuddling, Post-Chapter Two, Sharing a Bed, and other references to true crime, and then NOT PLATONIC, eddie and stan are still dead for the time being, references to reddie and BIKE! as unrequited as far as they know, richie just wants to eat mike's ass is that so much to ask?

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**Summary:**

Richie temporarily moves in with Mike, they watch Forensic Files, they talk about being gay and politics and shit, and then THE FEELINGS COME.

## what can i do for you?

### Author's Note:

okay so, the working title for this is "eat ass and watch forensic files" and in my heart is still called that, but what can i do for you by bob dylan is also the theme song for this so... bada bing bada boom.

chapter one is richie's POV, and chapter two will be mike's POV (idk when ch2 will be up just bare with me)

When Richie moves into Mike's place (temporarily, mind you), he's struck by the glaring lack of murder board.

"I just expected newspaper clippings and red string," Richie says, with a flourish of his hand. "And y'know, the whole conspiracy she-bang."

"What happened in Derry isn't a conspiracy," Mike says, good-naturedly. "A conspiracy entails at least two people colluding."

"Okay, nerd, I did, in fact, know that," Richie says, rolling his eyes. "I was just trying to make a point. I do love a good murder board though."

"Well, I apologize for the lack of murder board," Mike says, and crosses to one of his bookshelves. "I do have plenty of true crime books to make up for it. Do you want government conspiracy or something more low level?"

"How about Netflix?"

Mike stops with his mouth open and a book half off the shelf.

"You don't have Netflix?" Richie says slowly.

"No?"

"Wait," Richie looks around the apartment and up to the tower,

*searching* and comes up empty. “Do you even have a TV?”

“There are TVs and computers in the actual library, but I’ve been kind of busy, Richie,” Mike says. “What with all the—”

“Clown shit, right, dude,” Richie shakes his head and he’s struck with the uncontrollable need to just hug Mike, because Jesus, that is just *sad* .

Mike returns the hug warmly, although he furrows his brow suspiciously at Richie when they pull away.

“How do you keep up to date on me, man?” Richie says, gently punching Mike in the pec—which is WOW, solid. “Damn, bro, you are ripped for a librarian, okay, we’ll come back to that, but—”

“I’m actually a librarian’s assistant,” Mike corrects.

“Not the point, but *seriously* , Mikey, I have my laptop, let’s what *Forensic Files* .”

They set up on Mike’s pull-out futon which, according to Mike is never folded up into a couch because he “never really has company” and okay maybe Richie’s just really emotional right now and needs to let his friends know he loves them because, hello, he just lost his childhood best friend-dash-first love, so of course, Richie hugs Mike again.

While he’s holding Mike and Mike is holding him (in his big, strong, warm arms), something occurs to Richie.

“Wait, what about one-night stands?” he asks, letting Mike go. “You don’t need a couch for that, just one sturdy futon. And I mean, I know you’d make a murder board your wife and live happily ever after but—getting back to just how, like, sculpted by the Gods you are—please tell me this fold out couch has been properly *slept* in at least once by a beautiful woman who you’ve never seen again.”

Mike rolls his eyes and punches Richie softly on the arm, which ow —

“Oh, that did not hurt, Richie!”

"Have you *seen* your biceps, you could tap a tree and it would fall over," Richie argues. "That hurt."

"Mhm, sure," Mike says, and goes to open Richie's laptop. "Do you want to watch your stupid show?"

"*Forensic Files* isn't stupid," Richie says. "It's educational, which I know you're all about since you work in a library."

"Forensics *is* very interesting," Mike says. "You know, I find the history of fingerprinting quite fascinating."

"That's a great opener for speed dating," Richie says as he opens Netflix, scrolling to his continue watching and clicking on *Forensic Files* (third in the list after *The Office* —he was halfway through a rewatch of *Garden Party*—and *BoJack Horseman* —he has depression). "You should totally do that, by the way. I'd go with you, but I stopped dating women, like, fifteen years ago."

"I've never dated women," Mike says, and Richie aggressively slams the space bar on his laptop to pause the show.

"What?"

"I mean a friend from college set me up on a blind date once, but I don't really count that," Mike says, matter-of-factly.

"Wait, wait, wait, do you mean you've just never dated or that you've never dated women because you're—"

"Gay," Mike says slowly, clearly not understanding what Richie's so worked up about.

"You're gay?"

"Yes," Mike says, and he stretches it into a question.

"And, like, *out*?"

"Yeah," Mike says, shrugging.

"In *Derry*?" Richie says, incredulously.

“Yes, in Derry.”

“But it sucks here,” Richie says. “I’ve lived in Los Angeles since I was eighteen and I’m not even out. Like publically. How are you out, like, in *Derry* ?”

Mike hmms thoughtfully, understanding, and then shrugs again.

“Honestly, it doesn't come up a lot and I don't hide it if someone asks, but I also haven't had a lot of people to come out to.”

“Oh, dude, don’t make me hug you again.”

“I haven’t been *making* you,” Mike says.

“Yes, you have,” Richie says. “You keep saying sad things and it makes me sad. And we’ve had like the shittiest past few days, but you’ve been, like, alone in this stupid, fucking town for thirty fucking years, remembering all our fucking childhood trauma with no one to share it with. You must be so fucking lonely!”

Mike hugs him this time and Richie fists his hands in the back of Mike’s shirt.

“I’m okay, Rich, it’s...” he takes a breath, patting Richie’s back, and then continuing on, “I mean, yeah, I’ve been lonely, but I’m glad I have you all back now.”

“Except Eddie,” Richie says, and he *doesn’t want to start crying again, what the actual fuck, Trashmouth* .

“I got Eddie for a little bit,” Mike says. “Sometimes a little bit can be enough.”

And *oh* , that’s just *tragic* , because for Richie it’s never enough, not even fucking close, but Mike is ever the optimist.

“It can only get better from here,” Mike concludes.

Richie nods against his shoulder, missing Eddie, missing *Mike* somehow even though he’s *right fucking there in his arms* ; but Richie decides he is NOT going to cry, so he settles for being a dumbass

instead.

"Please tell me you're not a virgin though, if you're a virgin, I think I may actually cry."

"No, I'm not a virgin, Richie," Mike says, and Richie feels like he can *hear* Mike rolling his eyes. "I go to the Falcon sometimes, I'm not a total hermit, asshole."

Richie pulls back and grins, "nice."

They settle back and watch the show finally. Richie watches intently mostly, looking back and forth between the screen and a game of sudoku on his phone, while Mike slips on a pair of reading glasses (sexy librarian Mike is really working for Richie) and works on something obviously library and administration related.

Richie thinks Mike isn't really paying attention until Mike leans over into Richie's space, squinting at the screen and says, "the husband did it."

"No shit, Sherlock," Richie laughs, and pats Mike's thigh.

Mike catches his hand and Richie feels Mike's warmth creep up his arm and settle in his belly. He's his friend, he thinks, his *hot* friend, but his very good, loving *hot* friend who's just as lonely and touch starved as he is and it's *nice*. It's *nice* that if he hugs Mike, Mike won't push him away, it's *nice* that Mike will just hold his hand and it doesn't mean anything but at the same time means *everything*, because they fucking survived somehow. It's nice to be tactile. It's nice to have a friend.

They stay like that, holding hands loosely, until they both pass out, *Forensic Files* still playing.

When Richie wakes up, he's crying, because of course he is. It's like 3 AM, goddamn *Forensic Files* is still going, and Richie Tozier is absolutely sobbing into Mike's shoulder. Mike, who is a great friend, as quickly as possible pauses Netflix, closes the laptop, puts it on the side table, and gets to wrapping his arms around Richie and whispers sweet nothings in his ear.

Okay, all he's saying is "hey, Rich, it's okay, it's just a dream, we're okay," but Richie really wouldn't be opposed to the sweet nothings especially because, let's be real, it's not okay, it wasn't just a dream, and they might *physically* be okay, but Richie feels like absolute shit emotionally. And Richie's emotions were already pretty fucked up without the deluge of traumatic childhood memories of shame and fear cascading in.

And he misses Eddie. *Fuck* , he misses Eddie so much.

He must've said that out loud because Mike is just holding him tighter and saying, "yeah, I miss him too, Richie."

"Got to see him again for like 24 hours and it just like all came back," he says through his obnoxious blubbering. "It all came back."

Mike tries to shush him, runs a hand through his hair, rubs circles into his back, but Richie just can't shut up now.

"God, I feel so stupid."

"You're not stupid."

"No, no, I am. Honestly, the biggest fucking idiot imaginable. Listen, if Eddie was here he'd say the same thing. Big stupid Trashmouth."

"Well, that would be very Eddie of him."

Richie chokes out a surprised laugh and nods.

"Yeah," he agrees. "And he wouldn't shut up 'til I stopped crying."

"You wouldn't shut up either," says Mike.

"Well, I'm not shutting up now," Richie says. " *And* I'm still crying."

"No, you're not," Mike says, letting Richie go a little bit and looking at him with a small smile.

"I'm not?"

Mike wipes his thumbs over the tears on either of his cheeks, "nope."

“Well, would you look at that?” Richie sniffles a little bit still, but his crying has actually stopped.

Mike presses his forehead against Richie’s as Richie’s breathing slowly comes back to normal, one hand warm on his neck and the other still against his face.

“I hate to break up this beautiful moment, because to be held by a muscular librarian is definitely on my bucket list;” Richie says, letting his own hand drift over Mike’s head and neck. “but I really need to blow my nose.”

Mike sits back and laughs. A full-bodied beautiful laugh and Richie grins dumbly at him through his runny nose and his probably gross and blotchy face.

Mike grabs a toilet paper roll from the side table and hands it to Richie, who takes it wrapping the sheets around his hand a couple times before tearing it off and handing the roll back to Mike.

“Love how you don’t have Kleenex, just toilet paper,” Richie says and then blows his nose. “Truly a man after my own heart.”

“It doesn’t make sense to buy a separate product,” Mike says putting the roll back on the nightstand. “I’m just practical.”

“Right? It’s *easy* ! And it’s economical! Like why do I need to be fancy? Just give me some fucking toilet paper, it’ll do the job just fine.”

Mike nods, chuckling a little, and holds up the small bedside garbage can for Richie who throws the used toilet paper in. Mike sets the can back down and turns back to Richie, setting a hand on his shoulder.

“Eddie would hate it though.”

Mike looks at him sympathetically.

“Don’t worry, I’m not gonna cry again, I’m just saying. Eddie probably had that stupid cashmere whatever fucking Kleenex with like aloe in it or some shit. Like, come on, Eds, get some toilet paper, get an aloe vera plant, make it yourself.”



Mike smiles, but he still looks sympathetic.

“You really loved him, huh?”

Richie laughs a little self-deprecatingly and shakes his head.

“Honestly, man, I don’t know. I don’t know if I really know what love is? Like, that’s fucking sad to say as a 40 year old man, but I’m also gay and closeted and honestly...” he trails off, pausing, then points an excited finger at Mike. “You know what? Fuck it! Yeah, yeah, I fucking love him. Loved, love, whatever, yeah. I still love him. I loved him when I was an obnoxious 12 year old and I love him now as a successful untalented traumatized 40 year old closeted gay comedian with honestly no prospects in life after having a mental breakdown on stage and disappearing for a week.”

“Aren’t you planning to stay disappeared for a while?”

“Yeah, I talked to Steve. He’s not happy about it, but he’s gonna make a statement for me. I just have to talk it over with him more tomorrow.”

“Is that statement going to include you coming out?”

“No, I’ll do that in person on Twitter or something.”

“On Twitter is not in person, Richie.”

“Well, it’s the next best thing.”

“Does your manager know you’re gay?”

“I mean, yeah? I think so. Like, he knows I’ve fucked around with guys and he knows I don’t talk about it and obviously he knows my entire act is about being a shitty straight dude with a girlfriend who he treats terribly. So, I want to say that he knows I’m gay, he just doesn’t talk about it with me, because I don’t talk about it with him.”

“That’s fair, but maybe you should talk about it with him? You want to turn over a new leaf, right? After everything?”

“Yeah,” Richie nods. “The statement’s really just gonna be about Stan

without getting into any details and I'll just stay here and off Twitter and watch *Forensic Files* with you."

"You can stay as long as you won't, you know? As long as you don't mind sharing a bed."

"Are you kidding? I love sharing a bed! I mean, I'm totally ready to actually sleep now. Do you wanna cuddle?"

"You just wanna touch my biceps."

"Well, yeah, obviously. I am a simple man with simple needs."

"In all seriousness though, stay as long as you want," Mike says, squeezing Richie's shoulder. "Come on the road with me. I do kinda wanna get down to Florida at some point."

"Florida sucks though! Let's go somewhere exotic like," he pauses for dramatic effect and then says, "Vermont!"

"I'm gonna pretend you didn't just say that and turn around and go to sleep," Mike says and pushes his legs under the covers, laying down.

"Okay, I know you're turning your back on me here, but that just means you're offering to be the little spoon," Richie shuffles down next to Mike, getting comfortable under the blankets. "So, don't blame me if in the morning you wake up with my own big strong arms wrapped around you."

"Good night, Richie," Mike says firmly, but Richie can still hear a hint of a laugh in his voice.

"Night, Mikey," Richie replies, and scoots over, throwing an arm over Mike's waist.

Mike holds onto Richie's arm and laces his fingers through Richie's. Richie smiles against Mike's spine and finally gets a restful sleep.

It gets relatively easy after that. Richie helps Mike organize and pack

his things up. They decide what of Mike's collections he'll donate to the library and what he wants to keep. He was already living fairly sparingly in terms of possessions apart from the shelves upon shelves and stacks upon stacks of books, manuscripts, and texts; but Mike manages to downsize considerably, cutting his wardrobe in half and whittling his shoes down to two multi-purpose pairs.

Mike isn't entirely sure how he ended up with so many pairs of shoes, he definitely hasn't needed the majority of them. Plenty of them are old work boots he kept from when he was younger and worked on the farm, there's a pair of converse from when he was a kid that he'd saved up for following a brief interest in basketball. Two pairs are runners from an old boyfriend who forgot them at Mike's place (back when he was still living at the farmhouse) and somehow never seemed to make it out of Mike's possession.

("So, you actually had a boyfriend once," Richie muses, while they're tying shoes together with elastic bands and throwing them in a garbage bag to be donated to a halfway house in Bangor.

"Yeah, Chad and I were together for about a year and then he got a job in the UK," Mike says. "We ended on good terms. I wasn't ready for an upheaval of my life and he understood that."

Richie nods sympathetically for a moment, and then—

"Wait, *Chad* ? You dated a guy named *Chad* for a year? What is he a fucking football star from Ohio?"

"No, he's an English professor from Maine."

" *Chad* ? Please tell me he was at least a hot, fit nerd like you and not, like, a skinny mousy nerd, because you can't be named Chad and not have muscles... or be blonde... and have a skateboard."

"He was pretty fit, not gonna lie. He wasn't blonde and didn't have a skateboard though."

"Can't believe Chad can't live up to the full character of his name. Tragic.")

They usually have Netflix playing in the background. First, it was

*Forensic Files* , and then *The Staircase* , because they got to that episode of *Forensic Files* which ignited a conversation about misogyny among gay and bi men and how Michael Peterson's bisexuality is irrelevant to the fact he obviously hates women and is also a psychopath.

(Mike is very surprised Richie has such enlightened takes on the matter considering his comedy, until Richie reminds him he doesn't actually write his comedy. To which Mike replies that he still performs it and will have a lot of fucking damage control to do, because being gay doesn't mean you're not sexist—they *literally* just talked about this, Richie—even if your act isn't your work and is from a decidedly heterosexual perspective.)

They end up getting too pissed off by *The Staircase* and go back to *Forensic Files* because it's much more entertaining background noise. They leave it on while they talk, impassioned on a broad variety of topics.

Mike actually calls Richie out on his bullshit. It's not just a "beep, beep" to shut him up; he has genuine concerns about the way Richie's presented himself over the years as a straight apolitical comic when in private he's obviously gay and deeply political (and in Mike's own words: "actually fucking funny"). Richie knows that on a personal level, being dishonest has been bad for his mental health which very easily translates to his physical health; but he's been so preoccupied with his own shitty psyche for the past 20 years, that he failed to realize that his fictional offensive persona with absolutely zero knowledgeable irony is effective negatively on a bigger scale.

("You want people to like you," Mike says, gesturing with a book in his hand.

"Obviously."

"You want people *like you* to like you," Mike continues. "You're a public figure, Rich. You have a responsibility to discredit the shitty people who feel legitimized by your apparently apolitical comedy. No matter what you or anyone says, nothing is truly apolitical. Certainly not in 2016. I would never force you to come out of the closet, obviously, but it matters to make your stance on serious issues that

affect *you* and *me* clear.")

Richie loves this. It feels so good to have someone actually connect with him and it makes him so aware of what he's been missing all those years he forgot. Mike and Richie agree on all the important things, and where they don't agree it's because Richie's been living in a closet his entire life, and once Mike gives him a good kick in the ass, he comes around. Richie is being reminded he cares about things and talking about those things with someone who feels the same way is exciting and motivating. Mike's criticisms and encouragements make him feel respected for the first time in his life.

He's also struck by the feeling of realizing he's gay all over again.

Richie remembers having rousing conversations like this in college with a girlfriend, but there was the distinct awareness all the time that all he wanted to do was talk. And, yeah, Richie has always loved to talk and he could go on for hours on end, but he recalls once a conversation fizzled out she'd be so wired she'd want to have sex and Richie would try desperately to start up *another* discussion on Reagan being a massive piece of shit (hoping that might even *hint* that he's gay without having to say it).

With Mike, Richie is acutely aware that he's feeling whatever she was feeling all those years ago. When he talks with Mike about shit that matters it gets his blood pumping in a way that he doesn't know he's ever felt. It's a heady rush not just of attraction, but attraction to someone who *gets* him and challenges him and actually fucking cares about him. And lust is so much better when it's paired with love.

And Richie could probably love Mike *like that* ; and sometimes when they're debating the current climate of true crime as a genre and how it extends to them as marginalized people and the ignorance Mike, as a gay Black man, is faced with because he's not the victim straight white women want to cry over, Richie feels like he does love him in that way.

He knows he loves him as a friend. But now that he's not just objectively aware that he has a hot friend and that he actually wants to jump Mike's bones, the subject of love takes on a whole new meaning to Richie.

He almost feels like he's betraying Eddie's memory by wanting to fuck (read: make sweet tender love to) Mike, until he remembers his love for Eddie has always been unrequited. That makes him feel shitty of course, but ethically (or whatever) he doesn't have a reason to be guilty.

So, he keeps holding Mike through the night. Mike has always been easy with affection; no qualms about sharing a bed with his male friends or holding their hands. Richie is thankful for it, because even when he had thought of Mike entirely platonically, he needed that physical tenderness. Now that his feelings are not so platonic, he isn't sure if it means anything more for Mike. It's obvious to him that two men cuddling through the night, fingers laced together is... pretty fucking gay. They also both happen to actually be gay. So, is this just regular gay or, like, *gay* gay? Richie doesn't know. It's not like he's ever had a proper relationship; and all his one-night stands and his few casual weekend relationships didn't really leave room for cuddling, it was all sex. Now, this is all cuddling and no sex. Which is great, honestly, Richie could cuddle forever, especially with Mike who is very warm and all the contours of his body feel awesome against Richie's arms and chest and legs. But if sex were added to the equation... Well, Richie just thinks that'd be fucking swell.

He just doesn't know what Mike is thinking about it. Mike clearly enjoys being held, and Richie thinks he enjoys being held *by him*. And Mike was the one to hold Richie's hand first! Mike pulls him closer, wordlessly letting him know it's alright. But Richie can't read his mind, he doesn't know for sure.

He can't exactly imagine Mike spooning with Ben or Eddie or Stan, which definitely bodes well for him; but then Richie remembers Bill. Okay, there's definitely *something* with Mike and Bill. They've always had a connection, much in the way Richie felt he and Eddie had had. Oh, *God*, were Mike and Richie rebound cuddling from their long lost childhood crushes on straight men? Was this their way of getting over heterosexual married dudes (one of them dead)? Cuddling the nearest gay friend you can find and just *not fucking letting go*?

If that's what's happening here, Richie's impressed they've lasted a

whole two weeks without having sex yet. Maybe he should make a move? Should he do it when they're spooning at night? Go for Brokeback and pull Mike's hand onto his dick?

Okay, no, he'll kiss him first. Make it easy, just kiss him and see where that goes. In broad daylight while they're watching *Forensic Files* and maybe if Richie's lucky, he'll get to eat Mike's ass.

(He really wants to eat Mike's ass.)

He mentally fistbumps the air for good luck and buries himself deeper into the bed, into Mike's side, and falls back asleep to the sound of Mike's breathing in his ear.

### **Author's Note:**

yay i did the thing! okay you can follow me on twitter @theodoracrain, i'm on private rn but if you send a follow request and ur like 21 + and lgbt and not a weirdo then we can be buds!